The Middlebury Campus

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BEHIND THE CURTAIN: MIDDLEBURY PREPARES TO HOST DOUBLE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES IN MAY

By ALEC GONG
Contributing Writer

As graduation season approaches, preparation for commencement ceremonies for the classes of 2020, 2020.5 and 2022 has begun.

Per tradition, commencement for the class of 2022 will be held on May 29, the Sunday before Memorial Day. But unlike previous years the college will also welcome the return of another class — the class of 2020 — that week. With their initial graduation shifted to a virtual format due to the Covid-19 pandemic, members of the class of 2020 and 2020.5 will be able to celebrate their graduation in person on Tuesday, May 31.

Director of Event Management Jennifer Erwin and her team considered many factors while planning such a large institutional event. They evaluated staff resources and schedules, as well as the availability of facilities, event spaces and the commencement speakers. They also took into account the feasibility of hosting specific pre-graduation events for each class.

"Having to work with a compressed schedule, we focused our planning on a few of the important events that students wanted and would best provide connection and bring the graduates together," Erwin said.

This year's commencement is also affected by other large-scale events happening at or around Middlebury. This includes three different reunions — one of which almost coincides with the ceremonies — the Memorial Day parade in downtown Middlebury, and the opening of the summer sessions at the Bread Loaf School of English, Bread Loaf Writers' Conferences and Middlebury Language Schools.

After deliberation, the college ultimately decided to hold the ceremony for the class of 2022 on the usual Sunday and the ceremony

Nick Garber/The Middlebury Campus

Commencement for the class of 2019 was the last traditional graduation before the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, dual ceremonies for the class of 2022 and the class of 2020 are putting pressure on staff, who typically work extra in the spring to prepare for commencement.

Continued on Page 2

Acceptance rate drops to 15% for class of 2026

By IDEAL DOWLING
Editor at Large

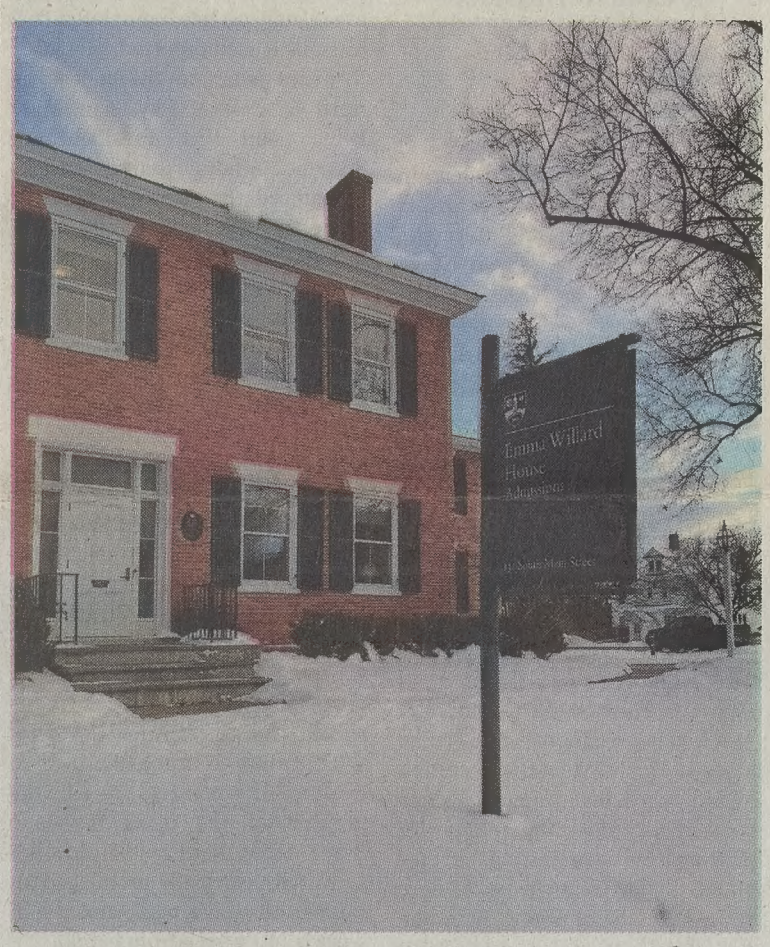
On March 26, the Middlebury College Admissions Office sent acceptance letters to 1,502 applicants for the classes of 2026 and 2026.5, adding to the 438 students who were accepted in December and February through the early decision application rounds to make a total of 1,940 admitted students. The overall acceptance rate for this year was 15% from a pool of more than 13,000 applicants. This marks the new lowest rate in public record, slightly lower than the 15.7% of 11,908 applicants admitted in last year's admissions cycle.

A little over half — 52% — of the domestic admittees are people of color, and a little over one quarter — 26% — are first generation college students.

Other than North Dakota, every state is represented in the group of admitted students, as well as Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam. California is the most common state with 252 admitted students, while New York is a close second with 251 students admitted from the state. The next four most popular states in decreasing order are Massachusetts, Connecticut, Texas and New Jersey.

Including both primary and secondary citizenships, a total of 89 countries are represented in the admissions data. The top countries are China, with 59 admittees, Canada with 36 and Mexico with 26. India, the United Kingdom and Germany are the next three most common countries. International students make up 10.5% of the admitted class.

The College expects to enroll about 640 students in September 2022 and about 120 in February 2023.



Daleelah Saleh/The Middlebury Campus

This year's acceptance rate of 15% marks the new lowest rate in years, slightly smaller than last year's rate of 15.7%.

Middlebury receives $25 million for conflict transformation

By ORLY BERKE
Contributing Writer

Middlebury has announced a $25 million grant from an anonymous donor to create the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation, a concept designed to reframe the way in which peacebuilding initiatives are discussed and pursued. The money will be doled out over the next seven years between five programs: Middlebury's undergraduate college, the Bread Loaf School of English, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, international programming and experiential learning.

This grant is the "largest programmatic support that Middlebury has ever received" according to a March 16 email from the Office of the President.

Professor of Psychology Michelle McCauley was appointed executive director of the grant. McCauley will lead the grant's vision of enacting five pillars that were outlined to help students across all of Middlebury's sects to better understand conflict.

"The goal is to recognize that we can look at conflict negatively always and turn away or we can stay engaged," McCauley said.

The grant will not solely address global conflict, but rather focus on interpersonal relationships and intercultural competency. The goal of the grant is to enable students to be able to engage in discussions on antiracism and environmental work and should expect to become more comfortable talking despite differences in opinion.

Center for Community Engagement (CCE) Director Ashley Laux is in charge of experiential learning for students, a process where students learn by doing, and hopes to get the CCE involved as soon as possible.

"It really resonates with me as a part of how we view the Center for Community Engagement: helping to provide students with experiential opportunities and diverse communities," Laux said.

The CCE currently offers curricular and co-curricular

Continued on Page 2

LOCAL

New Amtrak passenger train coming to Middlebury this July, increasing need for rail safety awareness

By MAYA HEKKINEN
News Editor

Starting in July, Middlebury will begin receiving service as a station on Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express train line, for the first time since passenger rail service ceased operating in the area in 1953. The service, originating from Penn Station in Manhattan, now includes Vergennes and Burlington after stopping in Rutland for over 20 years. While the schedule hasn't been finalized, a round trip — about seven and a half hours each way — will run seven days a week between Middlebury and Penn Station. While the service's official start is months away, the train has already been on the tracks in recent months for qualifying runs and to assess the route.

Vermont Translines already provides two Amtrak services in Vermont — the Vermonter, running from St. Albans to Washington, DC, via Essex Junction, Waterbury, Brattleboro and New York Penn Station, as well as the Ethan Allen Express running currently from Rutland to Castleton and Penn Station.

The increasing presence of Amtrak passenger trains in Vermont introduces significant safety risks mainly due to their differences from freight trains, according to Toni Hamburg Clithero, state coordinator of Operation Lifesaver of Vermont, Inc., and Amtrak grants program manager. While freight trains travel on jointed rails that produce a sound each time the train hits a joint, Amtrak intercity passenger rail trains travel on quarter-mile long continuously-welded rails that do not produce noise as loud or as often.

"The service of course is faster than freight, it's quieter than freight, and it's probably going to be running more in the daytime hours than we necessarily have with freight. The bottom line is, you don't want to come in contact with either kind of train, they're faster and quieter than you think — and that's especially true with the passenger trains," Clithero said.

Freight trains are more common in Vermont, so many locals may be familiar with the precautions necessary around these trains and experience a false sense of security around the new tracks. According to Clithero, the quiet whooshing sound of the Amtrak trains can be heard primarily behind and beside the train rather than in front, and can be mistaken for the sound of wind in the trees. The risk is compounded by the way trains appear from afar.

"When you look at a train approaching, they're such large objects that they look like they're moving a lot slower than they are, like when you see airplanes hanging in the air as they're starting to land, it's the same kind of phenomenon, so I really want people to understand that they need to make really smart choices around tracks and that they should never try to beat a train," Clithero said.

Clithero cited reports of college students and other Vermonters walking, jogging or skiing along the tracks or using them as a shortcut. Under 5 VSA s. 3734-Trespassing, all such actions are illegal and punishable with a $200 penalty. The tracks are private property, and the only lawful place to cross is at a designated crossing, most of which are public but some of which are private and farm crossings. The trains also only sound their horns at public crossings. It is also important to ensure that there is plenty of room on the other side of a crossing with a traffic signal

Continued on Page 3

NEWS

Reported cases low in week after mask mandate ends
By LAUREN THOMSON

Matriculate at Middlebury guides low-income high school students through college applications
By RYAN MCELROY

▶PAGE 2

LOCAL

Starksboro Attempts to Withdraw from the Mount Abraham School District
By BEN WAGNER

Addison Central School District goes mask optional
By CHARLIE KEOHANE

▶ PAGE 3

OPINIONS

God give you health!
يعطيك العافية!
By MARYAIT KHADER

Strength through vulnerability
By RUHI KAMDAR

▶ PAGE 6

ARTS & CULTURE

Reel Critic: "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
By GREGORY MARCINIK

High school is hell: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" after 25 years
By MAGGIE MEAD-MCCAUGHAN

▶ PAGE 9

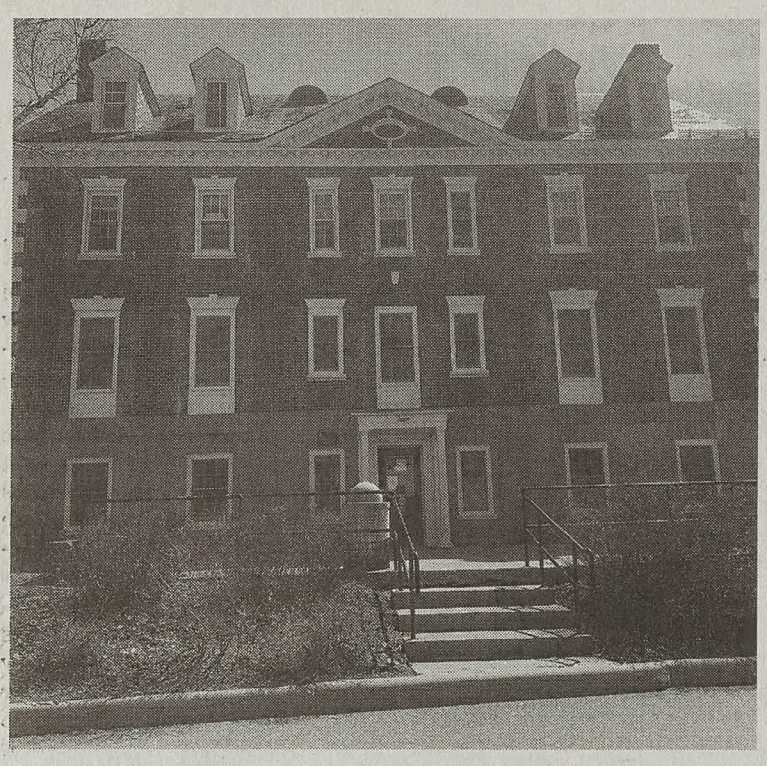
SPORTS

Lea Davison '05 announces retirement from Mountain Biking World Cup
By CHARLES CROUNSE

Club sports coaches reflect on their coaching journeys
By EMILY JONES

▶ PAGE 10

Reported cases low in week after mask mandate ends



Abigail Chang/The Middlebury Campus
Students can now get tested at the back porch of Parton Health Services.

By LAUREN THOMSON
Staff Writer

Reported Covid-19 cases at Middlebury remained low in the week since students returned from spring break, after the college shifted to an optional mask mandate on March 18 and stopped requiring weekly Covid-19 testing on March 13. According to the college's Covid-19 reporting dashboard, there are two active cases of Covid-19 on campus, one student and one faculty member, as of March 31.

Mark Peluso, director of health services, announced the shift to a mask-optional policy in an email to the college on March 9. Currently, masks are optional for all students except those in isolation and recovery. Masks are currently still required in classrooms and in some academic buildings at the discretion of individual departments. Peluso stated that this shift, along with increased antigen testing, is part of Middlebury's move "to a more endemic state of living with the virus."

Along with the shift to a mask-optional policy, the college is no longer requiring students to get tested once every week, instead offering rapid tests that students can use if they are concerned they might have Covid-19. Since March 28, the first Monday after spring break, only 20 total completed PCR tests have been reported.

In an email to the college on April 6, College Physician Mark Peluso and Vice President for Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka announced that starting April 11, Covid-19 PCR testing will move from Virtue Field House to the testing window of Parton Health Center, located on the patio facing the Service Building. They cited the lower volumes of PCR testing due to the increased availability of rapid tests as the reason for the move.

This low case count is a shift from the outbreak that the college faced in the weeks prior to leaving for spring break. At its height, the college reported up to 222 active cases. The prior outbreak has affected how students are currently viewing the lower prevalence of Covid-19, especially as many students have already had Covid-19.

Ciara Burke '22 had Covid-19 earlier this semester. Despite the removal of the mask mandate, Burke noted that Covid-19 has not appeared especially prominent on campus this past week and a half since coming back from break.

"It seems right now that after the first few outbreaks that Covid on campus has settled down a lot. Most of my friends have had it by now," Burke said. "But the mask mandate in some places like classes

Matriculate at Middlebury guides low-income high school students through college applications

By RYAN MCELROY
Contributing Writer

Middlebury is one of 14 colleges around the U.S. that partner with Matriculate, a national nonprofit organization that strives to give high school students the confidence and knowledge to strategically apply to top universities.

Middlebury began participating in Matriculate in the fall of 2020 and last year grew to 14 Middlebury students known as Advising Fellows (AFs). Each Advising Fellow is paired with one to four high school students from around the country, in total advising 36 members of the class of 2022. As of late March, 27 of the advisees had been accepted to at least one college or university.

The Advising Fellows meet with students at least once a month to ensure that they are on track with deadlines and prepared to apply. They share their current experience at college and help give information that will enable them to make decisions about where to attend college. Last year, they worked remotely with the students to create a list of colleges, meet application and financial aid deadlines and eventually commit to a university.

Simon Jenkins '22 joined the program in 2020 as the head advising fellow and has overseen the class of 2021 and class of 2022 cohorts. In addition to training and leading fellow Middlebury advisors, he successfully guided students through their applications and enabled them to enroll at universities like Cornell University and the University of Michigan.

"We sit somewhere in between a friend and a college counselor where we've been trained about what the application process looks like, but we've also just gone through it ourselves," Jenkins said. "A lot of our students are coming from underserved populations, and we're stepping in to fill a gap that they might not be getting from their school or families."

Matriculate has found that over 50 percent of high-achieving, low-income students don't apply to a single college that is an academic match. They also reported that only 8 percent of these students apply to college in a similarly strategic manner to that of their higher-income peers. By creating relationships between these students and those currently attending college, the organization hopes to give them greater access to the best education they can achieve.

This spring, the most recent cohort of Advising Fellows is finishing up their advising of the high school class of 2022 as the students receive decisions, commit to a school, and ultimately matriculate at their chosen college. Ellie Thompson '22 is a current Fellow and previously served on the Advising Fellowship Leadership Team. In her advising, she helped students understand the complicated admissions process and assisted them in making informed decisions about college.

"You get to help the students and guide them through the college process. For them, this might be their first time seeing the college search happen in action," Thompson said. "Knowing that these high school students are on the brink of adulthood and are learning how to make decisions, giving them the knowledge to make decisions is something that I really think can be life changing."

Matriculate's impact is not limited to the high school students applying to college; student advisors who volunteer their time with this organization have also found that they have learned from the program.

> "Knowing that these high school students are on the brink of adulthood and are learning how to make decisions, giving them the knowledge to make decisions is something that I really think can be life changing."

"It's given me a new perspective on what it means to be a part of higher education," Thompson said. "[Thinking about] who is a part of your college community starts before the people even come to campus, and even starts before they even know about the schools that they may be applying to and attending a year later."

The next cohort has already been formed from applicants last fall, who are now being paired with students in the class of 2023. The organization's leaders look forward to growing the organization so that more Middlebury students can participate and help expand equal access to college.

"I think there's definitely a lot of room for growth for Matriculate. I always said this seems right up Middlebury students' alley just because I've sensed that commitment to service here," Jenkins said. He also expressed his gratitude for the assistance of the Middlebury Admissions Office in establishing the program and for how Middlebury has continued to support their efforts.

For those interested in joining the program, Matriculate at Middlebury plans to recruit students next fall to serve as Advising Fellows in the 2024 cohort, guiding high school students who will graduate in two years. Any Middlebury student who is not in their senior year can apply to join the program. Those accepted will undergo training in the winter and be paired with students in the spring of 2023.

"We want anybody and everybody who is slightly interested in college access to learn more about Matriculate," Jenkins said. "Any major, any hometown, any state, any financial background, any uniqueness that you bring will just help our program."

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Ella Roelofs '23.5
Ella Roelofs '23.5 and Charlotte Marks '23 after a successful pond skim. Go to go/photooftheweek to submit your own photo of the week.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: MIDDLEBURY PREPARES TO HOST DOUBLE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES IN MAY

Continued from Page 1

for the classes of 2020 and 2020.5 on a Tuesday. This will allow the college enough time to turn over and make needed adjustments to the campus to prepare for each ceremony and event.

Even so, two ceremonies, especially so close to one another, require a lot of preparation and organization, according to Erwin.

Planning began during fall 2021. The college had to locate venues for the events, determine the availability of equipment set-ups, staff the events, contact support services, design informational websites and invitations, and provide meals and picnics.

Since so much effort has gone into preparing for these two events, Erwin said she and her team carefully planned these two ceremonies "as almost a mirror in many ways." From the equipment setups to the ceremonial aspects, they hope to minimize any additional impact on staffing resources while keeping in line with traditional commencement ceremonies. "This spring's commencement ceremonies are both exciting to plan and challenging at the same time," Erwin said.

With the loosening of pandemic restrictions, many welcome the return of an in-person celebration. The challenge remains to ensure the college has available resources and employees — from faculty and staff to outside contracted services — which are integral to the commencement weekend.

Erwin is confident that the double commencement will be a success.

"Middlebury College's commitment to providing a robust, fun, and well-earned celebration of our students' achievements has steered us through these challenges," she said.

Middlebury receives $25 million for conflict transformation

Continued from Page 1

engagements and will launch multiple new programs and bolster existing ones this summer with the grant money. One of the new experiences is History in Translation, a fully funded twelve-day trip for undergraduate students from the International Christian University in Tokyo to explore the impacts of Executive Order 9066 — President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order to incarcerate over 100,000 civilians of Japanese descent in 1942. The students will visit Manzanar Internment Camp and conduct service work to understand the damage of the order.

McCauley emphasized that for this experiential learning, Middlebury's job is to prepare students to address and discuss these conflicts and to provide a place to host discussions about conflicts afterwards.

These practices link to the grant's goals and objectives of making Middlebury as a community more comfortable and better prepared to have discussions around conflict.

"We will just have a much deeper understanding of conflict... for really making a positive difference with it, and that doesn't leave when the grant leaves," McCauley said.

Although the grant is only set to be implemented over the next seven years, the hope is that these practices will remain in the community much longer and will provide students with the necessary skills for the future workplace and world.

Starksboro attempts to withdraw from the Mount Abraham School District

By BEN WAGNER
Staff Writer

Starksboro is the latest Addison County town to attempt to withdraw from its school district. On March 16, the Starksboro branch of the statewide group Save Our Schools began circulating a petition to force a town-wide vote about withdrawing from the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD), according to an article in The Addison County Independent.

Save Our Schools' website describes the group as a "grassroots movement to uplift small town voices as it pertains to the education of our towns' children and the wellbeing of its citizens."

The petition gathered enough signatures to force a vote that will take place in May. Save Our Schools' first effort was focused on Ripton's withdrawal from the Addison Central School District.

According to Herb Olson, a member of Starksboro Save Our Schools, watching the Ripton withdrawal process was helpful for advocates in Starksboro. "They were dealing with some of these same issues," he said.

Save Our Schools advocates are primarily worried about the potential closure of Robinson Elementary School in Starksboro, according to an article in The Addison Independent. These fears have been augmented by the creation of a committee to study a potential merger with the Addison Northwest School District (ANWSD).

Olson said part of his worry about the possible MAUSD-ANWSD merger was that the recommendations of the state merger committee would not go back to the elected school boards in both districts.

Per the petition, any already-in-motion withdrawal process, after approval by Starksboro voters, could be terminated by the town's Selectboard. That only applies, though, if either the ANWSD-MAUSD merger does not occur, or if the merger includes language that prevents the closure of an elementary school without approval of that town's voters.

Others, such as Patrick Reen, the superintendent of MAUSD, are in support of a merger.

"It seems clear to me that a merger offers the greatest chance of both communities offering the kind of programming and support we want to our students at a cost taxpayers can afford," Patrick Reen, superintendent of MAUSD, wrote in a statement to The Campus.

Another concern for Starksboro residents is the passage of H. 727 by the Vermont State House of Representatives. Broadly, the bill places more power over school district composition in the hands of the state, which already controls the majority of school funding.

Save Our Schools advocates said the bill would effectively remove local control of school districts.

"It's an abomination," Olson said, referring to H. 727. "We're going to have a [withdrawal] vote on this sometime in May. Under the terms of the bill, that vote would have been wiped out."

If it were to pass the Senate and be signed by Governor Phil Scott, H. 727 would take effect on July 1, prior to the earliest date that the Starksboro withdrawal process could finish. As a result, Starksboro's withdrawal would be forced to undergo the processes laid out in the bill.

The town of Lincoln voted to withdraw from MAUSD on August 24, 2021, and thus would be grandfathered in to the new bill.

The bill has yet to pass the Senate and be signed into law by Scott.

State funding in Vermont is deeply tied to average daily pupil attendance. As a result, Reen explained, MAUSD might be forced to slightly raise tax rates if Starksboro withdrew. However, a MAUSD merger with ANWSD would likely increase the cost efficiency of the provision of public education.

Operating as an independent district would bring a set of new challenges to Starksboro. "If Starksboro were to withdraw and were to operate as a standalone district, I think they would find it very difficult to provide a high quality education at a cost the taxpayers could afford," Reen wrote.

Oliver Olsen, a member of the Vermont State Board of Education, told The Campus that for a withdrawal to officially take place, even with a positive vote by residents of Starksboro, the Board would need to determine the students of the withdrawing community would be educated in a school in compliance with State Board rules.

The financial ramifications remain unclear, as the study focusing on the merger has yet to result in any changes to existing school funding legislation.

In addition to the fiscal effects of any district changes, removing students from a school district in which they would eventually matriculate Starksboro elementary schoolers might still attend middle school in MAUSD can lead to educational differences — in this case, Starksboro elementary schoolers might still attend middle school in MAUSD.

"Programmatically, if Starksboro withdraws, it is possible that students from Starksboro who attend Mt. Abe will have had a different educational experience than students in MAUSD schools,which could have some implications when they matriculate to middle school," Reen said.

According to Olson, "[the withdrawal issue] is about how boards treat their communities." He said he believes that the disconnect between school boards and state officials has recently increased.

Per The Addison Independent, nearly two thirds of eligible Lincoln voters participated in the vote on whether or not to withdraw from MAUSD. The withdrawal option won by a large margin, 525-172.

Amy McGlashan, an advocate against Ripton's withdrawal in early 2021, expressed that it was likely that Starksboro would vote to withdraw from their school district.

"There's no real active opposition," said McGlashan. Advocates for withdrawals tend to be very actively engaged in a campaign for the changes that they seek, while there is no strong active support or campaign for maintaining the status quo, she explained

McGlashan was unseated by Joanna Doria who ran on a pro-town-control platform in an election on March 3.Despite certain obstacles, Olson emphasized that Save Our Schools plans on rolling out more information ahead of the election scheduled for May.

"We're confident," he said.

New Amtrak passenger train coming to Middlebury this July increases need for rail safety awareness

Continued from Page 1

present so that cars don't get stuck on the tracks. Clithero emphasized that even when tracks appear innocuous to cross, the only place that is legal and safe to cross is at a designated crossing.

Tragedies still occur often and are very much a risk in Vermont, especially considering many may be unaware of the new service and

> "We want zero tragedies in Vermont, and so we need everyone's help to get there."

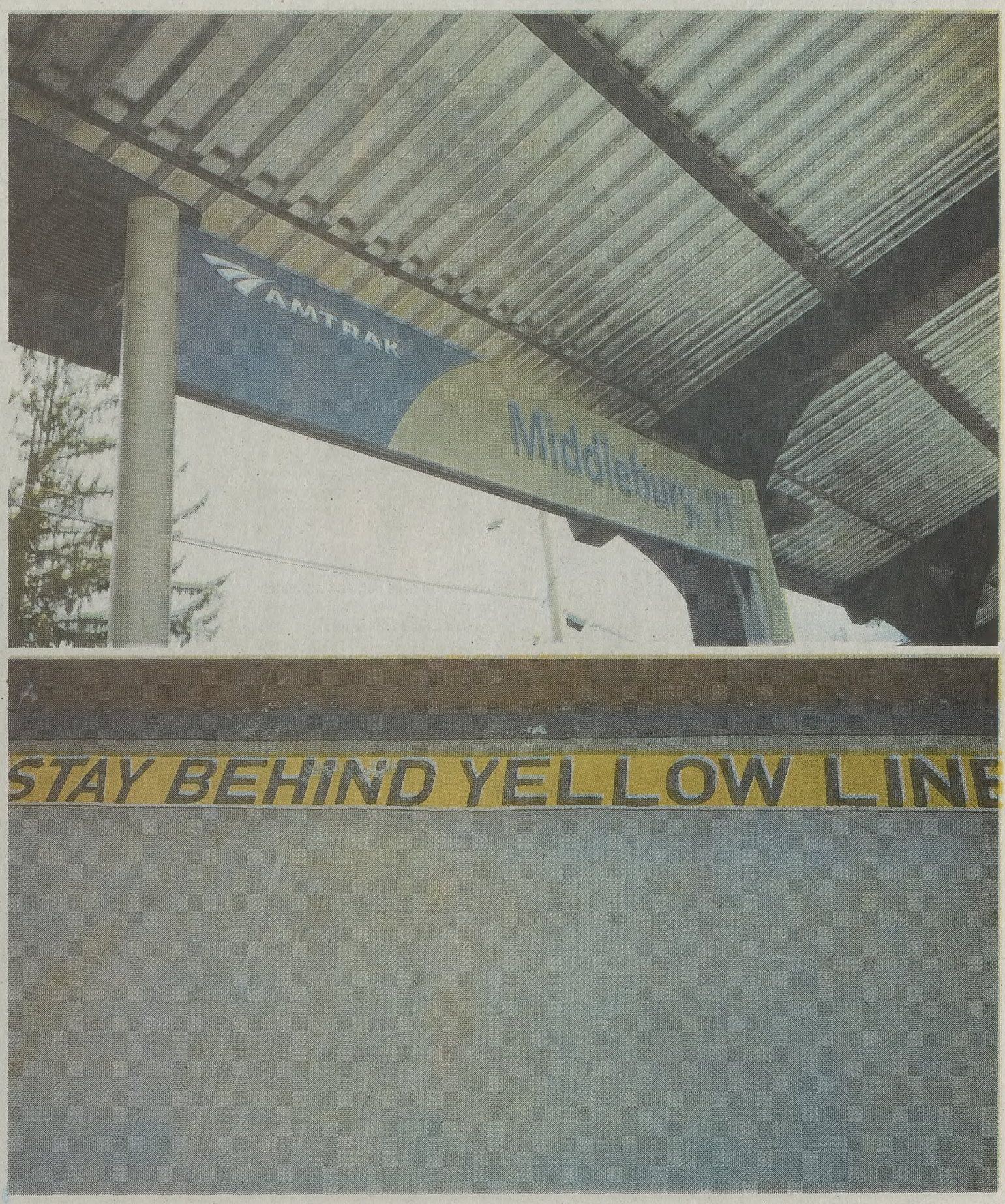
the fact that the train is already on the tracks at random times. Additionally, even during normal service, the train can be delayed and may run at unexpected times.

"Someone was killed in New York State by the Ethan Allen Express just a couple of weeks ago, a tragic reminder that every three hours a person or vehicle is struck by a train in this country," Clithero wrote. "So it happens a lot more often than people might think."

At each official crossing there is an Emergency Notification Sign listing the crossing number and phone number of the train dispatcher for quick use in the case that a vehicle or person is stuck on the tracks.

Operation Lifesaver Vermont is a state partner of Operation Lifesaver, Inc., a national nonprofit providing educational training and materials in rail safety. As part of spreading awareness, Clithero encourages people to sign Operation Lifesaver's online rail safety pledge at oli.org, with the hope that Vermont might lead the way in pledging to stay safe around trains.

"We want zero tragedies in Vermont, and so we need everyone's help to get there," Clithero said.



Florence Wu/The Middlebury Campus

The new Amtrak station in Middlebury. Passenger rail service will begin through this station in July.

College museum, performing arts events and athletic games re-open to the public

By JULIA PEPPER
Local Editor

Just as shifting Covid-19 policies have affected Middlebury College students, staff and faculty, they have also impacted visitors' access to certain parts of the college. Recently, outside visitors, including families of students as well as local community members, have been allowed to attend sports games and performing arts events, and the Middlebury College Museum of Art will be open to all as of April 15. These changes create ample opportunities for members of the local community to participate further in college spaces.

Middlebury College Museum of Arts reopens after rehang

The re-opening of the museum means that at the museum, people will soon be able to visit without making reservations in advance. Jason Vrooman '03, the chief curator and director of engagement for the museum, spoke about the museum's new phase.

"[The museum staff] hope it can be a place to meet lots of different needs and interests," Vrooman said. "We would be thrilled if our permanent collections and exhibitions can be a place for enjoyment and for conversations. We have similar goals for the local and campus communities: that the museum is a place to think and explore the world in a new way."

Theresa Harris, a member of the Friends of the Museum Board and a local resident, works on publicizing museum information as one of many tasks. She explained that over time, and with the skills she's learned from her job as director of Edgewater gallery, she has learned more about the best ways to inform and attract potential museum visitors.

Harris explained that the Friends of the Art Museum program functions to increase outreach and membership, working to attract alumni as well as those currently connected to the college and the local community. She looks forward to increased opportunities to bring students and younger children to the museum through potential school field trips and drawing sessions.

"I think that's very important," Harris said. "Many people in the Middlebury community do not realize the resource that exists in their town."

Vrooman echoed these sentiments, saying, "Although in many ways Midd students, professors and staff are a very important audience, we really want to be a resource for the community. It's very exciting that in a rural area people can come and see the world."

Both Vrooman and Harris spoke of their excitement for museum visitors to see the drastic museum rehang that has taken place. The museum has changed its permanent collection installations to have a more of a global approach, with exhibitions organized around themes rather than certain time periods or geographic areas. There will also be more frequent variation, not just among the temporary exhibitions, but throughout the permanent collections as well.

"We're hoping the museum is telling more stories," Vrooman said.

Students also have a large role at the museum, and can sign up to be student friends of the art museum, which gives them free membership and information about upcoming events at the museum, as well as other perks.

Indeed, some Middlebury students serve as Museum Ambassadors, training to lead tours of the museum for students, senior groups and others.

"The reopening marks an exciting return to in-person connections between Middlebury students and the local community," Vrooman said. It will also rebuild and strengthen connections between the local community and the museum itself.

The Middlebury College Museum of Art is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday. More information can be found on their website.

Sporting events welcome back locals

Sporting events have also opened up to the public recently. As Erin Quinn, director of athletics, explained, no spectators were able to watch sporting events when they started in January. Around mid-January, students were permitted to attend. Beginning in February, college policy permitted certain events, including sports, to be open to all. This included Middlebury faculty, staff and families as well as people from the local community.

"Many of our student-athletes feel a strong connection to the local community from various volunteering activities and an appreciation for the support they get from fans in the local community. Obviously some of these interactions have been limited during the pandemic, but for ice hockey, for example, they would typically do a 'Skate with the Panthers' game to encourage families to attend games and meet the players and skate with them after the game."

Indeed, support from locals has been enthusiastic, and sporting events create a nice opportunity to bring many people together. This was especially true at the women's ice hockey championship.

"Over 2,000 friends attended each game, providing enthusiastic support and a fantastic atmosphere for the team that had such an amazing season," Quinn said. "This was particularly gratifying because we had started spring break so many students had left campus. Fortunately, some students were still able to attend, which was greatly appreciated, but the community provided the appropriate championship atmosphere."

Mahaney Arts Center continues to offer both in-person and virtual events

Events at the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) have been open to the public since fall 2021. As Liza Sacheli, director of MAC explained, although arts events by and for students still ran last academic year, MAC events were closed to the public from March 2020 through August 2021.

"The MAC's audiences, in the aggregate, are generally one third Middlebury students; one third Middlebury faculty, staff, alumni and emeriti (basically, folks that are part of Middlebury's extended family); and one third community members. Both before the pandemic and now, we have welcomed audience members from all of these groups. But students are always our most important audience," Sacheli explained.

"One of our primary goals is to build a sense of community through the arts," she added. "Having a diverse audience helps do that — it allows people of different backgrounds and identities to have a shared experience."

> The pandemic did, however, create an opportunity for a series of free, virtual events. On average, over 500 people attended each virtual event, while Robinson Hall only seats 372.

The pandemic did, however, create an opportunity for a series of free, virtual events. On average, over 500 people attended each virtual event, while Robinson Hall only seats 372.

"Though we missed welcoming live audiences into our venues, the silver lining was that by going virtual, we reached a much wider audience than usual," Sacheli said.

Now, even though public visitors are allowed into MAC performances, virtual streaming options are still offered for many live events, and a few concerts have been kept free.

Addison Central School District goes mask optional

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Beginning March 14, the Addison Central School District (ACSD) transitioned to "mask-optional" status following new Vermont state guidelines. In an email sent to the ACSD community, ACSD Superintendent Peter Burrows thanked students and staff for helping keep the school safe over the past two years and emphasized how all members of the community could now decide whether or not to wear a mask.

ACSD is a public district comprising nine schools and approximately 1,000 students from seven towns. The district includes Mary Hogan Elementary School and Middlebury Union Middle and High Schools located in the town of Middlebury.

"It is completely understandable that we will each approach this change from our own personal experiences," Burrows said in the email. "Within our schools, staff have focused on talking to and supporting students with their masking decisions while working to create a community that respects each individual's choice."

ACSD announced Feb. 16 that they were planning to re-evaluate mask mandates following Governor Phil Scott's announcement that schools with a vaccination rate of 80% and higher did not need to extend the mask mandate starting Feb. 28.

After receiving this announcement, ACSD embarked on the process to re-consider masking policies, seeking input from the scientific community. The district hosted a COVID Community Conversation on March 8, featuring state experts and local pediatricians. The panel discussed public health and answered questions from the public.

The email announcement also linked a video featuring students and staff from Middlebury Union High School sharing their perspectives on whether or not they will continue to wear their masks, highlighting the importance of individual choice. Some stated that they would continue to wear masks to protect themselves and immunocompromised family members. Other students shared that they felt safe enough to unmask at school again and welcomed a return to normalcy after two years of wearing masks at school.

ACSD will continue to provide antigen testing for students and staff and keep their Covid-19 reporting dashboard updated.

CREATION AND INTERPRETATION
There is no single correct way to look at and understand a work of art.
This gallery invites you to consider choices artists make as they express ideas through visual language, including which materials to use and how to create emphasis through elements of art like color and line. It also presents some of the traditional approaches of art historians, including careful analysis of form and technique. Other interpretive frameworks—particularly considerations of how gender, race, and class influence the production as well as the reception of art—have informed how works of art are displayed throughout the museum.
As you explore the galleries, remember that even when their names have been forgotten, a specific person—or group of people—made each work of art or architecture you encounter. Whether created yesterday in Vermont or one thousand years ago on the other side of the planet, each object carries these stories with it.
You, too, are an individual with a unique story. Museum staff members hope that you find the interpretive materials useful, but also encourage you to discover your own points of connection with the objects and histories presented—and to carry those discoveries forward.

Florence Wu/The Middlebury Campus

The Middlebury College Art Museum underwent an extensive rehang around a new organization concept that groups art by theme rather than chronology or region.

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The Middlebury Campus

Continuing to care

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

With the end of Middlebury's indoor mask mandate came a return to pervasive individualism — in most places if you want to wear a mask, you do, and if you don't, you don't. The college administration is no longer the primary regulator of Covid-19 guidelines. Beyond required masking in classrooms and a few other designated spaces, the onus falls entirely on students' own discretion. Now, it's a matter of choice, one defined by personal risk tolerance and individual logic. Nevertheless, as members of a small community, our actions are still fraught with the potential to affect others.

> While there are many aspects of pandemic life we hope to never return to, transparent communication within our close-knit campus is something we urge the Middlebury community to make space for...

We hope that the newfound freedom to make these sorts of choices is accompanied by a continued sense of self awareness and empathy. The choice to not wear a mask, for those who are not in their 90-day immunity window, is in essence, a trust exercise. We have entrusted our peers to stay home or wear a mask if they're under the weather and to be open about how they're feeling.

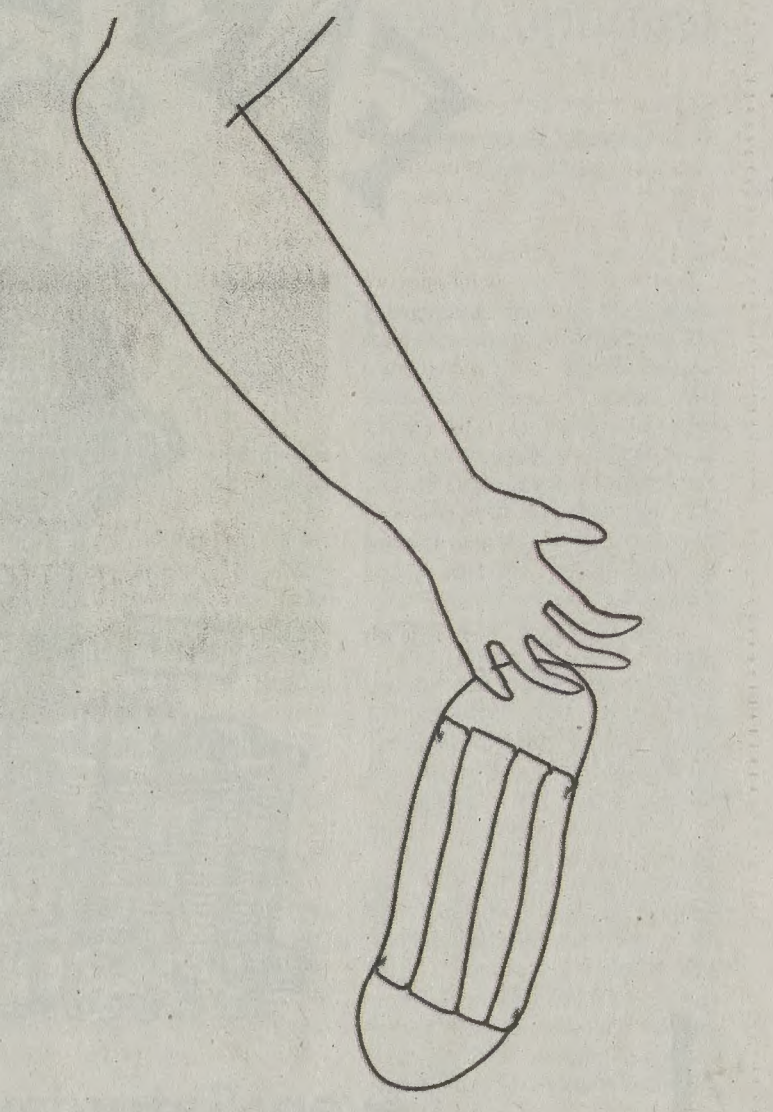
While there are many aspects of pandemic life we hope to never return to, transparent communication within our close-knit campus is something we urge the Middlebury community to make space for as they navigate a return to normalcy. For the most part, compassion, patience and self-care were emphasized during Covid-19 in ways they perhaps weren't before, and we hope this continues.

At pre-pandemic Middlebury, we dragged our contagious, sniffly selves to class, only staying home if we truly couldn't get out of bed. We made health choices based largely on what we wanted and needed and thought, without much of a second thought for the community around us. The academic infrastructure was also less yielding, with professors often requiring more formal justifications for absences (and online options were essentially unheard of.)

Our choices are now dictated by one's personal preference again — which isn't a bad thing. (We as a board have been able to see each other's faces at meetings in person for the first time in over two years, and for the first time among our younger staff members.)

However, we hope that as masks themselves start to become more obsolete, our consciousness and awareness of others remains resolute. This can be as simple as asking others what they are most comfortable with, or defaulting to wearing a mask if that's what others in an enclosed space seem to be doing.

In addition to their public health significance, masks held tremendous social and cultural significance — a way of overtly demonstrating that you cared about the safety, health, and comfort of others. This external display of goodwill is no longer as cut and dry. All of this is to say that if you still care about others perceiving you as such, a great way to show others you care about them is by continuing to communicate candidly about expectations and comfort levels. After this major change to Covid-19 policies, many of us are excited to return to a Middlebury that feels like it did pre-pandemic. We're grateful for the ability to smile at friends as we pass them in the dining hall or gather together in groups while seeing each other's faces. But even as we transition into this new phase and acknowledge its benefits, it is also important to continue some of the things that we've learned over the past two years — especially the concern and consideration that we've developed for others.



Sabrina Templeton

Arabic Reflections with Maryait:

"God give you health"

Op-Ed

Maryait Khader is the Teaching Assistant in Arabic.

يعطيك العافية!

لا أنسى صورة وجه أستاذي المغربي عندما دخلت إلى صفه وقلت له "يعطيك العافية" هذه العبارة هي بمثابة مفتاح لكل من يزور بلاد الشام والخليج العربي ومصر، نستخدمها في كل السياقات لكل شيء حرفياً.

للترحيب أو التوديع للتعبير عن تقديرك وشكرك لشيء فعله شخص ما لك مباشرة، أو لتقديرك لشيء لم يُفعل لأجلك؛ فلنقل إن والدتك عادت متعبة من عملها وأنت تعشر بتعبها هذا، فيمكنك أن تقول لها:" يعطيكِ العافية". ليس هذا فحسب نستخدم هذه العبارة لنقول لسائق التكسي أننا نريد أن ننزل منه هنا عندما نصل وجهتنا كما يمكن أن يستخدمها البعض بسياق ساخر كأن يقول لشخص خرّب أمر ما "يعطيك العافية.!"

الترجمة الحرفية لهذه العبارة العربية التي بتعلّمها تكون قد اختصرت تعلّم موضوعات كثيرة على ما يبدو هي: أعطاك الله الصحة.

في أسبوعي الأول في ميدلبري عندما كنت أدخل قاعات الطعام وأرى الزملاء الذين يعملون بجد وإخلاص كنت اتجّه نحوهم لأقول:" يعطيكم العافية" وقبل أن أنطق الكلمات بالعربية، أتذكر أن عليّ إيجاد عبارة مشابهة بالإنجليزية وحين أجد نفسي غير قادة (ربما لتواضع مهاراتي في اللغة) أكنت أقوم بترجمة هذه العبارة حرفياً لتجدني أقول لهم باللغة الإنجليزية ." God give you health"

لأجد على وجههم نظرة شبيهة بنظرة أستاذي مع اختلاف بسيط فإني أجد أيضا ابتسامة جميل. أما أستاذي المغربي فكانت نظراته بلا أي ابتسامات وبعد أيام من استخدامي للعبارة معه تبيّن أنها تعني النار بالدارجة المغربية بالتأكيد كان يفكّر ماذا حصل لهذه الفتاة تدخل للصف كل يوم وتتمنى أن يعطيني الله النار.

God give you health!

I will never forget the face of my Moroccan teacher when I entered his class and said to him, 'Ya'tik al-'afiya.' This expression is a key for everyone who visits the Levant, the Arab Gulf, and Egypt — we use it in all contexts for literally everything.

For example, we use it to say hello or goodbye, to express our appreciation and gratitude for someone who has done something for us, or to appreciate someone's hard work or dedication. Let's say that your mother came back from work, and you felt that she was tired; you can tell her 'Ya'tiki al-'afiya.' Not only that, but it is also used to thank taxi drivers when they drop us at our specific destination.

In a sarcastic context, like when someone ruins something, we can say: 'Ya'tik al-'afiya.' By learning the literal translation of this Arabic phrase, you will have shortened so many topics.

In my first week at Middlebury, when I walked into the dining hall and saw my colleagues working very hard, I turned toward them to say 'Ya'tikom al-'afiya.' Before I could say the words in Arabic, I remembered that I had to find a similar expression in English. I couldn't do it (maybe due to my humble English skills), but I ended up translating it into "God give you health." I always found on their faces a similar look to that of my teacher with a slight difference, a beautiful smile always followed their astonished look.

> We use it to say hello or goodbye, to express our appreciation and gratitude... or to appreciate someone's hard work or dedication.

As for my Moroccan teacher, his looks were without any smiles. After days of using the phrase with him, it turned out that the word 'Afiya' means fire in the Moroccan dialect. Of course, he thought, "Why is this girl wishing fire upon me whenever she greets me?"

So maybe you know how to use it now, and 'Ya'tikom al-'afiya.'

Strength through vulnerability

Op-Ed

Ruhi Kamdar is a member of the class of 2022.5

Photos by Jordan Saint-Louis '24

From left to right: Olivia Kilborn '24, Ruhi Kamdar '22.5, Jonathan Summeros '25 and Sahana Raman '25.

Human nature is a paradox.

As social beings, we are born with an innate desire to belong, to want to be liked. It is made even more profound from the propensity an individual feels to be part of something greater. Like mosaics, we are individual pieces that fit together to become one big mosaic, each piece carrying a piece of another. The pieces left out are "outcasts". However, belonging is biologically inherent. So, we hope against all logic to find our place within a society that decides who you should be. But we remain children in the playground running around aimlessly, trying to fit in. Lost but hopeful.

Society feeds us different labels that define us. Who you should be becomes rigid. How you should act becomes clockwork. How you feel is something you hold onto. In institutions like Middlebury College, we become so caught up in presenting ourselves in a way we think fits the mosaic. Our individual piece needs to be immaculate. There is an ongoing battle figuring out who you are and what is expected of you. How you can be perfect. Frankly it is exhausting.

We get so caught up in presenting ourselves in a way we think is right. But on whose terms? How do we get to know people better when they are already hiding, sometimes behind a wall so thick they too can't find themselves? The epiphany that we are hiding at least parts of ourselves may help unravel what we cover up. Unfortunately, more often than not, we end up hiding parts of ourselves because we sense that the other may be motivated by self-interest or acute self preservation. As Frank Bruni says, "much of the confidence we project is a camouflage we perfect." We become confident in presenting ourselves in a way we know fits the system but in the process, we lose confidence in who we are.

The simple truth is that you can exist within a social context without altering your identity. Sometimes vulnerabilities are where your strengths lie. How then can we go from merely existing within society to being seen? To be unafraid to be ourselves?

My idea is simple. Wear who you are on your sleeve. Think about a label that has always defined you. Cross it out. Be you.

Here are some snippets of individuals who were willing to take part in my project and be brave and bold to speak their truth. I urge each and everyone of us to start somewhere and to break down these walls that have blocked depth. Let us get strength through our vulnerabilities.

My idea is simple. Wear who you are on your sleeve. Think about a label that has always defined you. Cross it out. Be you.

Sahana: Outsider/Accepted

I chose the words outsider and accepted to represent how I felt when I was younger in school versus later. All my life, I have lived in a primarily white town where very few people looked the way I did. When I was a lot younger, it used to bother me and make me feel like I didn't belong. Sometimes I was even jealous of other girls in my class because of how much attention they got. As I got older, I started embracing my culture a lot more and once I found my real friends, I felt more accepted. I found people who accepted me for who I was and never judged me. Looking back I wish I never felt like I was less than or inferior to other people around me just because I looked different.

Ruhi: Insufficient/Enough

For as long as I always thought that there was something fundamentally wrong with me. It was so innate, so deep rooted that I could never comprehend it or even face it. I felt as if I was constantly moving through molasses, stuck in this spiraling mindset that weighed me down but allowed me to trudge along just enough to figure out the right direction for myself. However, for so long, and even now, I live through a lens of personal insufficiency, and hold this heavy burden of not feeling good enough in everything I do. Ironically, no one else sees me as such. They view me as highly functional, comfortable in a bed of endless possibilities. I do not. Each day I try to be okay and some days merely just function. I too am just a child running around aimlessly in a playground. But why is that not okay? I am enough.

Olivia: Docile/Ambitious

In a community that demands and assumes certain behavior from female-identifying Asians, I wanted to highlight positive interpretations of traits that have historically been ascribed negative connotations:

Docility doesn't constitute a lack of individuality or initiative, and having ambition shouldn't be perceived as an unexpected achievement. I was raised in a predominantly white neighborhood and was often met with assumptions about how I should act from both the adults and peers in my life. I was relegated to stereotypes of the quiet, unopinionated Asian girl, and people would act surprised when I expressed any form of ambition. As an elementary-aged child, I internalized these external expectations of myself and my ability to voice myself was severely impacted. As I grew older and gained confidence, I attempted to directly defy those labels by explicitly expressing my opinions. Yet, the more I did that the more that ambition was weaponized against me—the initial remarks of praise I received for speaking up turned into negative reactions from my peers. Women, even more so with BIPOC women, must navigate a careful line between being deemed as ambitious or bitchy and rude. This is a boundary I am still attempting to navigate and a narrative that I, alongside many others, am actively trying to change. And while at times I still feel constrained by these pre-ascribed labels of either being too submissive or too ambitious, I hope I can reveal how these two characteristics can be sources of both oppression and empowerment for Asian women. I want to reframe two labels that have been used against me as sources of empowerment, rather than labels insinuating my own insufficiency.

Jonathan: White Washed/Me

I chose my words because I grew up in a place where a Black kid speaking and acting in a proper manner was considered against the norm. So any time I acted in this manner, whether it be in front of white or Black kids, I always got called not Black enough or white-washed. My identity always shifted based on external pressures. Eventually, I stopped caring about that label or at least I try to not care.

I just really want to be known for me.

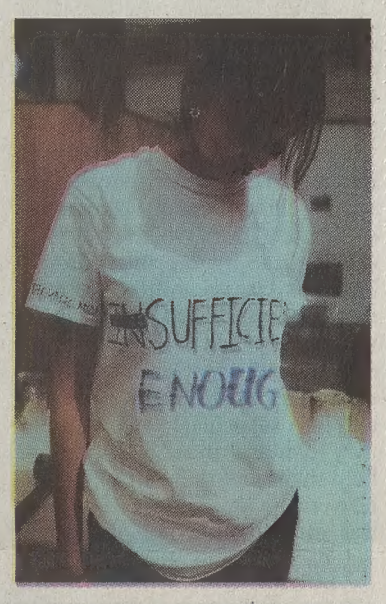
We are all human and something isn't a paradox is that we are not perfect. We are just in a constant default state to portray ourselves in a way that makes us look highly functioning all the time. We need to start embracing the messy truth that we all struggle. So let's create a community that liberates us.

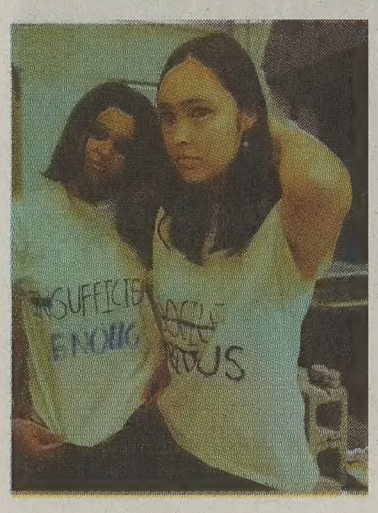
Don't get me wrong, things don't have to be so deep all the time, but they don't have to be so shallow either. Not everyone needs to know everything about you, but you do not have to portray yourself to be perfect every single moment either. I am urging us to try and move away from what is evident on the surface because after all struggles are not unique, we all go through them and grow through them.

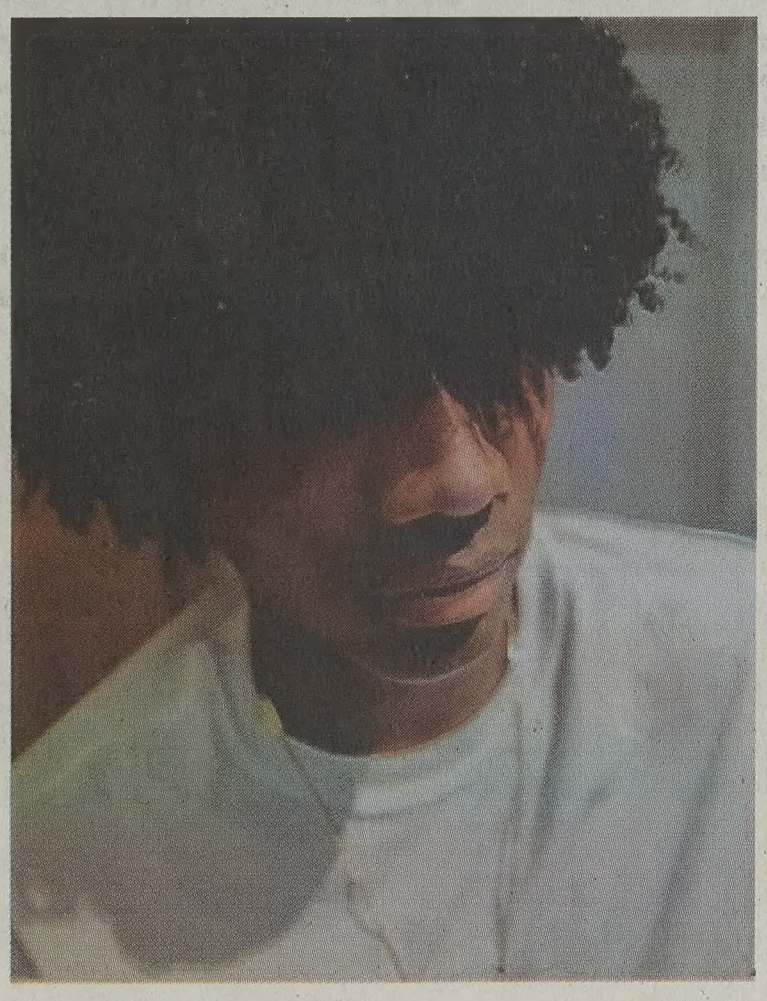
So start by being a little more attentive.

Listen a little closer.

And if you feel like a child in a playground again, remember that we all are.

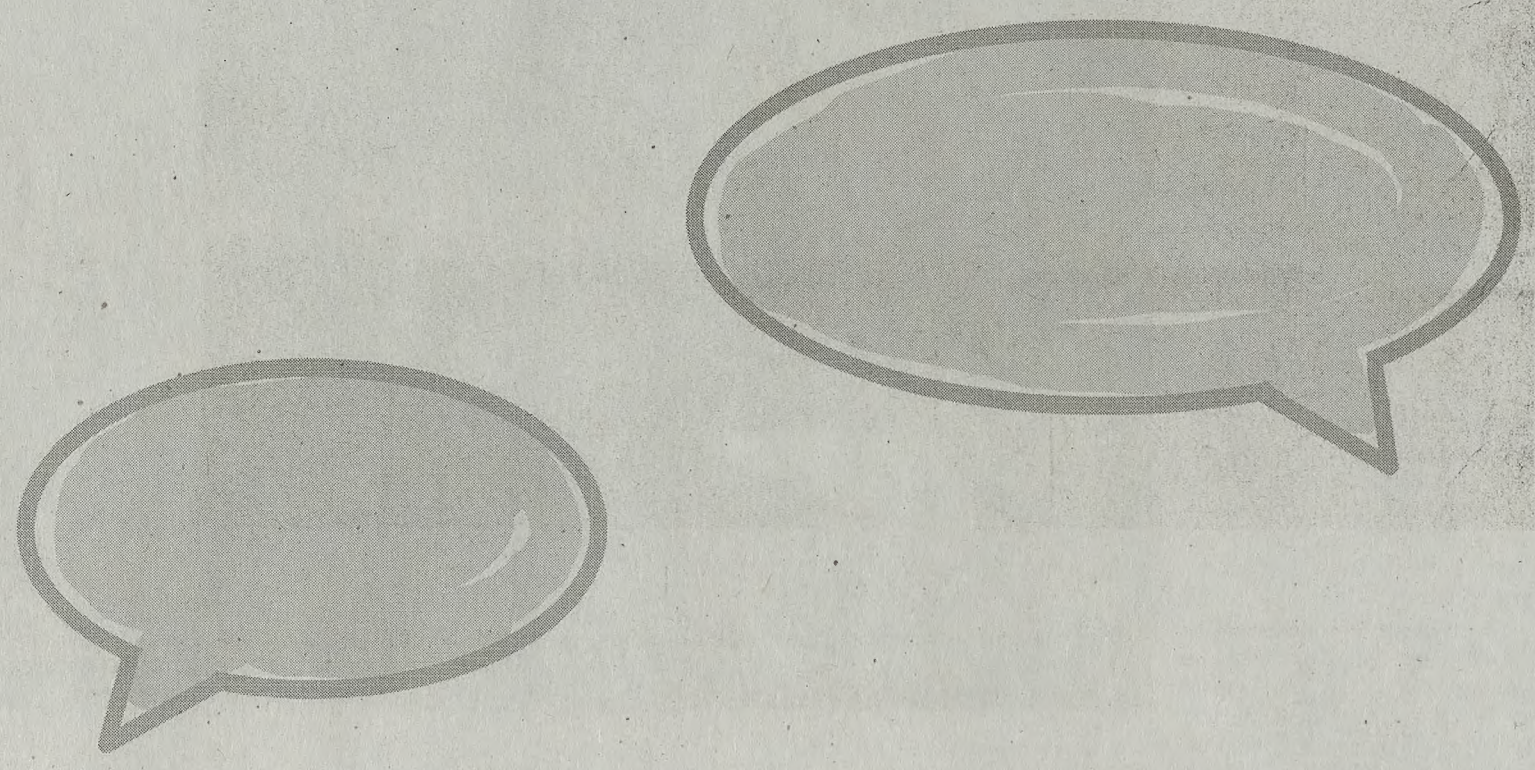






(Academic) conversations with friends

By ELIZA KING FREEDMAN
Arts & Culture Editor



Abigail Chang

Since coming back from spring break, a lot of my conversations with friends and acquaintances have revealed new interests and values about people I either know well or have been getting to know. Hearing about museums people have gone to, trips they've gone on, and ways they've spent their time at home (even just something like cooking with their parents) has shown me new sides of people.

Perhaps it is a small thing, but I've found that as the semesters ramp up every few months, we stop really talking to each other at meals and in moments of passing. Our minds are always filled with schedules and assignments, and we use what time we do have together to give our minds a break.

> This isn't some cry to make friendships at Middlebury more intellectual ... But perhaps we could get a little further into the weeds with each other.

And that isn't inherently bad, but it often only shows us singular sides of people, especially our more peripheral friends.

I'm not the only one who feels this way. When asked how he felt about this concept, Emmanuel Tamrat '22 replied, "I recently changed my major, and I am no longer in classes with my friends, so I am less able to commiserate with my friends about things we experienced in a class," said Emmanual Tamrat '22. "So I just get a really superficial look at what they're doing, and I'm not able to help them and they're not able to help me. Our conversations are less focused on school now, but this way we just get right into the banter."

And getting right into the banter is in no way a bad thing — there is a time and a place, and, more often than not, banter is more than welcome. But my friends and I are all studying different majors, and we all have different interests. I realized that while I may feel like I know everything about them and their personal lives, I often know less about my friends' classes and specific academic interests than I do about those of the semester-long friends I make with the people who sit next to me in classes.

This isn't some cry to make friendships at Middlebury more intellectual, because (trust me) that is not what we need at all. But perhaps we could get a little further into the weeds with each other.

Friendships are something to be worked at.We are all at Middlebury to learn about how to think and how to write (you know the "liberal arts" spiel just as well as I do), but we are also here to learn about people and build what could be lifelong relationships.

After asking around, it seemed that other people sort of agreed — not every conversation needs to be serious, but on the whole we don't value time and conversations with the people around us enough.

Liv Cohen '23.5 reflected on this concept with me."I'm in a class where we're paired with a random classmate, and all year I have to meet with him once a week and discuss the readings, and we don't know anything about each other, but we have to discuss religion and violence and cults. And I realized that I don't know how my own friends would even talk about these things, but it's so interesting to hear his perspective. And that's what you want from college. We are most comfortable talking to people like us and staying on the surface level, but these conversations are so helpful, and conversations like that are what college is about, and it's really rare at Middlebury. It's a small school but we make it so much smaller than it is."

It is very easy to get caught up in how small Middlebury is — to feel like everybody knows everybody, and like we already know everything we need to about Middlebury. But there is something exciting about having conversations we've never had before and consciously continuing to get to know people, even though three months at Middlebury can feel like three years. There is a competitive culture here surrounding who has the most work, who can be busiest, and it almost overrides the question:What is it that we are so busy doing?

We all decided to join this intentionally collaborative environment for a reason, and each of our reasons is entirely different, which is exciting. So in the midst of rising temperatures and overwhelming workloads, let's keep our interactions with each other from falling to the wayside. Because in my opinion, it is in those surprising moments when a friend lights up to answer a question, or goes on some niche tangent, where we learn the most.

WRMC Radio Roundup: Exploring old and new sounds

By the WRMC EXEC BOARD

Have your Spotify playlists become stale? Is your weekly mix just not cutting it? Maybe it's time to branch out and listen to something new. The Executive Board of WRMC, Middlebury College's radio station, has selected a wonderfully wide range of albums, spanning time and genre, for your listening pleasure. Check back each week for a new set of recommendations.

*RIYL (recommended if you like)

Concert Manager's Pick — Jose Morales '22

Album: "MOTOMAMI — ROSALÍA

Genre: Pop, Alternative Reggaton, Experimental Pop

RIYL: Mala Rodriguez, Bad Bunny, Charli XCX

Blurb: MOTOMAMI is ROSALÍA's third album, where she continues to experiment with popular Latin sounds, such as reggaeton and bachata, along with more expressive pop tracks. She provides some fun and catchy performances and production on tracks like "CHICKEN TERIYAKI" and "LA FAMA (with the Weekend)" but also includes some stripped down tracks highlighting her vocal performances and introspective lyrics with tracks like "HENTAI" and "COMO UN G". The 16 track album has a lot to offer, as ROSALÍA proves to be a versatile and risk-taking artist.

Concert Manager's Pick — Jose Morales '22

Track: Muchas Cosas — Natalia Lacunza

Genre: Latin Pop, Indie Pop, Bedroom Pop

RIYL: Kali Uchis, Steve Lacy, Mené

Blurb: If you're looking for more catchy bedroom pop, here is Natalia Lacunza's latest track, Muchas Cosas. She is a pop artist based in Spain who got her first break from her performance in reality talent show, Operación Triunfo.

Library Manager's Pick — Kyle Hooker '24

Album: Car Wheels On A Gravel Road — Lucinda Williams
Genre: Folk-Rock, Country

RIYL: Kathleen Edwards, Cowboy Junkies

Blurb: This is another childhood album, but I was re-listening to it recently, and it is quite a gem — not a bad track on the album. There is lots of twang and beautiful guitar with poetic lyrics. The third track is called "2 Kool 2 Be 4-Gotten"; I think it's pretty funny that she's using texting lingo in 1998.

Pia Contreras

Courtesy Photo

High school is hell: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" after 25 years

By MAGGIE MEAD-MCCAUGHAN
Contributing Writer

On March 10, 1997, the first episode of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" aired on the WB network. The episode — titled "Welcome to the Hellmouth" — introduces Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar), a 16 year old sophomore looking for a fresh start at her new school. Unfortunately, Buffy also happens to be the most recent in a line of young women chosen to be The Slayer, the sole barrier between the world and the forces of darkness that prey on it.

25 years later, "Buffy" has been immortalized as one of the most influential shows to air on television. While it may no longer be a household name so long after the release of its seventh and final season, "Buffy's" larger impact is clear. Its titular character took the "helpless blond girl in a horror movie" trope and gave her superstrength and the power to fight back. With Willow (Alyson Hannigan) and Tara (Amber Benson), the show explored one of network television's first nuanced queer relationships between two women, and it is also responsible for pretty much every one-off musical episode you've ever seen (but more on this later). For a show that first aired in the '90s, "Buffy" was pretty damn revolutionary.

The question, then, is how does it hold up now? It's no secret to those who know me that it remains one of my personal favorite shows, but the unfortunate graphics, somewhat ridiculous name and overall cheesiness of much of the first season can all be somewhat off-putting. What's more, Joss Whedon, the show's creator, has recently come under fire for his mistreatment of the actresses who worked on "Buffy," and its spinoff, "Angel." Charisma Carpenter, who played mean-girl Cordelia Chase, tweeted about the "hostile and toxic" environment he created for her on set. Michelle Trachtenberg — only 15 when she joined the show as Dawn Summers — followed up Carpenter's story, revealing Whedon wasn't allowed to be alone in a room with her.

All of these factors would be enough to bury a lesser show deep in the sands of time, especially one as purportedly feminist as "Buffy the Vampire the Slayer." Still, against all odds, "Buffy" actually does withstand the test of time.

When "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" is at its best, it tells the truth. In the first few seasons especially, the fictional demons Buffy faces are representative of the very real battles many girls face while growing up. Sometimes the nefarious force at play is an overbearing mom who inhabits her daughter's body to relive her highschool glory days, and sometimes it's a girl who felt so invisible that eventually she became it. Either way, remove the supernatural, and you're left with something every teenager can relate to. That has always been "Buffy's" strength: the ability to use fantasy as a way to examine our reality.

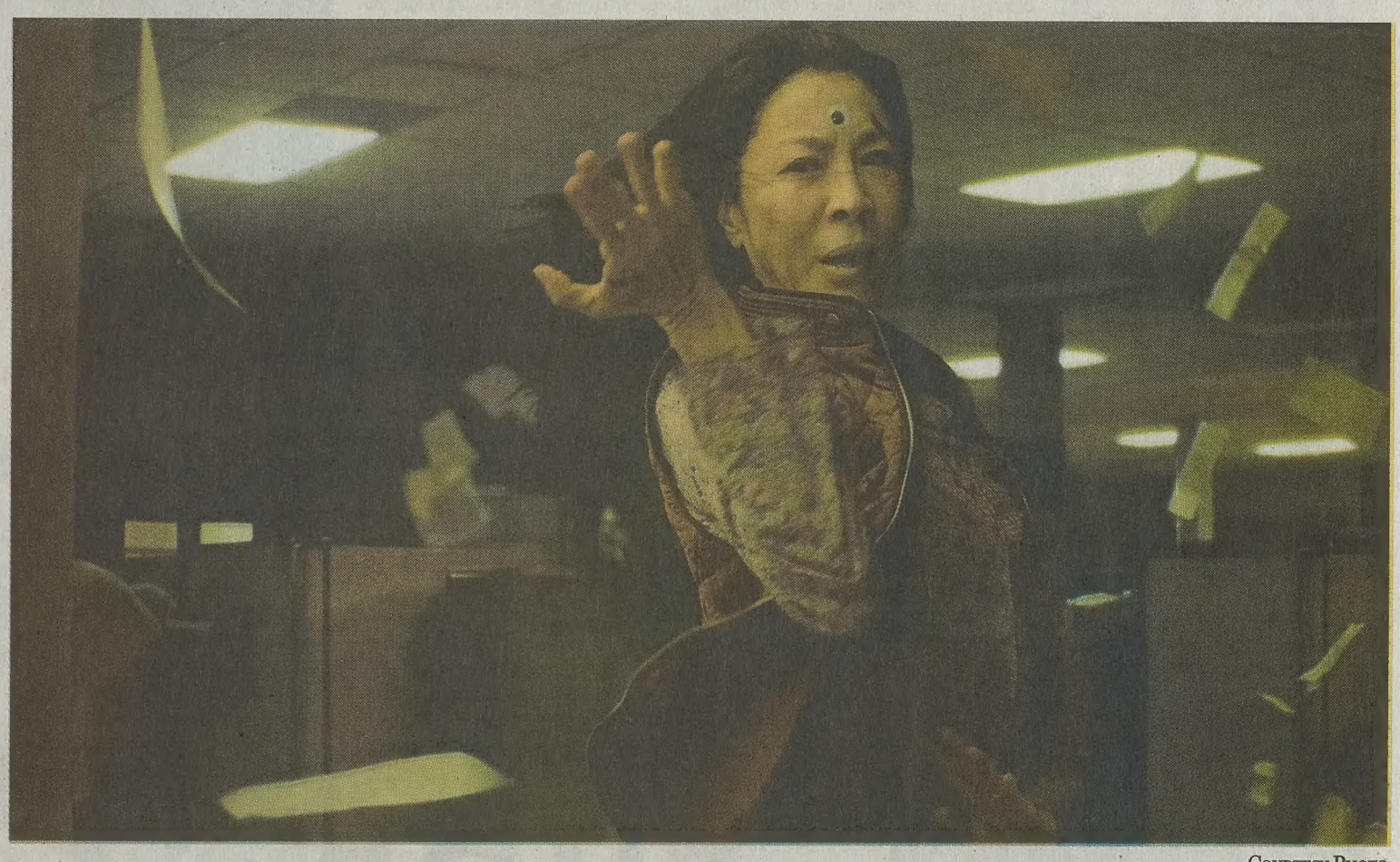
Two of "Buffy's" best episodes accomplish this by taking its supernatural elements to their opposite extremes. First, season six's episode "Once More With Feeling" is "Buffy '' at its most fantastical. "Once More With Feeling" sees Buffy, her friends and the rest of Sunnydale bursting uncontrollably into song and dance, using the fantastical roots of the show to create a musical extravaganza. The musical episode comes during one of Buffy's lowest points emotionally, and it plays beautifully with the tension between Buffy's internal struggle and the brave face she wears around her friends and family. Ironically, in being forced to put on a literal performance in this episode, Buffy drops the role she has been playing throughout the season and finally confesses her inner turmoil. Instead of the out of touch, eccentric mess it could have been, "Once More with Feeling" is clever, raw and critical to the arc of the show — ultimately using the performative medium to reveal truth.

On the other end of the spectrum, season five's masterpiece "The Body" dials back the supernatural almost entirely. When someone close to Buffy dies, "The Body" takes the time to examine the ways we grieve. It's not the kind of episode we might expect from "Buffy," although hopefully by Season 5 you've learned that you can't rely on your expectations too much anymore). While there is technically a vampire attack, the dangers of the Hellmouth take a backseat to the emotional vulnerability of the characters. The episode would be remarkably poetic even in a show that isn't about fighting demons, but it feels especially poignant for the otherwise action packed fifth season to stand still and allow its characters to experience their grief. "The Body" is Buffy and her friends at their most human, and they fall apart just like us.

That's the thing about "Buffy"; it never fails to remind us that the exciting, fantastical, supernatural world on screen isn't so different from ours. Even if we're not saving the world from another apocalypse, we all have our demons to battle.

Reel Critic: "Everything Everywhere All At Once"

By GREGORY MARCINIK
Contributing Writer



Courtesy Photo

The meaning of life is a question that many movies attempt to answer. Sometimes, the film can achieve a satisfactory answer to this immortal question, like in "Forrest Gump" or "The Matrix." Out of them all, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" stands as one of the best works of art to attempt an answer to this question. It is a film that demonstrates that life is absurd, ridiculous and often meaningless, and gives an answer for how it can be lived. On top of this, the movie is crafted to be entertaining and hilarious, putting most Marvel movie action sequences to shame with its masterful choreography and inspired creativity. The fighting sequences are exhilarating and the special effects seem real. But the brilliance of the movie is that it is fantastical in its premises and captivating in its execution. It is a comedy that rivals "Airplane" in its silliness and is an intellectual masterpiece that can enrapture even the snobbiest of viewers.

The movie focuses on Evelyn Wang (Michelle Yeoh), a struggling laundromat owner. Every choice that she has made in her life seems to have led her to her current state of boredom and anxiety. Not only does Evelyn's husband, Waymond (Ke Huy Quan), want a divorce, but she is being audited by the IRS, her relationship with her daughter Joy (Stephanie Tsu) is tenuous and her disappointed father Gong Gong (James Hong) has finally arrived from China after ignoring her for years due to her eloping to America. After a stressful reunion, Evelyn goes to an IRS building to dispute an audit and Waymond's body is possessed by a version of himself from a different universe known as Alpha Waymond. Alpha Waymond then explains to Evelyn that the multiverse is under attack by a reality-bending being known as Jobu Tupaki. He explains that an Evelyn from a different multiverse was killed by Jobu Tupaki and that this Evelyn is the only one left to save the multiverse.

What arises from this premise is an incredibly captivating and soulful movie. It is striking in its visuals and production design — the number of unique costumes and effects is awesome. Jobu Tubpaki's many costumes and makeup is aesthetically pleasing to all who watch. The reality-bending fights too are a sight to behold. But though the premises are fantastical, the characters themselves are nothing but real. They are not the larger-than-life static characters seen in today's Hollywood blockbusters but are strikingly familiar. The performances of the main actors were impeccable. Yeoh's portrayal of a struggling laundromat owner was done to such perfection that it seemed impossible to imagine her in any other role. She is serious yet silly, kind yet austere, and the intricacies of her character make her portrayal of Evelyn remarkably powerful. Quan's portrayal of her loving and naïve husband is heart-wrenchingly beautiful. It is his kindness that gives the audience hope for the world. His portrayal of Alpha-Waymond as well as the other Waymonds in the multiverse too can only be done by a first-class actor.

The film's score is also one that will surely speak to the listener. Written by Son Lux, the soundtrack was exhilarating and beautiful. The first chords in Debussey's "Clair de Lune" are repeated numerous times in different songs throughout the film to produce a lasting effect on the listener as the world falls into slow motion. The lonely sadness of the piece perfectly encapsulates the modern feelings of insignificance that are continually faced by much of humanity and the audience. Jobu Tupaki becomes the proxy for the audience. She sees the pain and suffering in the world, deciding that the only logical path for her in life is death. But the film demonstrates that the true meaning of life is kindness and one must draw meaning from the people they love. It beautifully shows that people may be small, stupid and unable to see past the façade of their reality, but they can love and be happy within their bubbles, and that is the beauty of the movie. In the end, the characters realize the incredibly huge size of the world they live in, but they accept their insignificance and choose to live with the ones they love.

"Everything Everywhere All at Once" is one of the first movies that shows the ridiculous nature of our present world. It is a true 21st-century piece of art, a new genre of Sci-Fi dramedy that encapsulates our time of confusion, anxiety and hopelessness. Its scenes of people exploding into confetti and hot-dog-handed humans are the absurd moments that make the movie interesting. But where some works of media produced today may come off as cringy or stupid, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" is nothing but impeccable in its execution. The movie may be the first of many pieces of art that paints a true reflection of the increasingly dystopian and scientific world of today. It speaks to today's generations who face the problems of climate change, artificial intelligence and racial divides, and it gives them direction. And while many even great pieces of art simply identify the problems in the world, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" teaches those that see no meaning in life that they still have their friends and family to love. This is what will mark it as a special movie that will be remembered for years to come.

LEA DAVISON '05 ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM WORLD CUP MOUNTAIN BIKING

Courtesy of Matt Delorme

Lea Davison maneuvers through a tricky section of the course at the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Sports Editor

To say that Lea Davison '05 has led an accomplished mountain biking career is an understatement.

The Middlebury alumna and Vermont native announced her formal retirement from the World Cup circuit on Feb. 22, but that doesn't mean she'll be walking away from the sport any time soon. Now, she turns her attention to the Life Time Grand Prix, where she will join 29 other elite female cyclists to compete in six of America's most iconic cycling races.

Despite boasting an illustrious career in mountain biking spanning more than 20 years, cycling wasn't always in Davison's blood. The two-time Olympian ran track and downhill skied in high school, catching the attention of several colleges before committing to run and ski at Middlebury. It was only in her junior year of high school that Davison's cycling career began.

"I was running track in the spring and a friend of mine said, 'Hey, you should try [cycling] out,'" Davison told The Campus. "I tried it and loved it immediately. It was a perfect combination of running and skiing because it required you to have an engine but also to have technical handling abilities."

Davison initially raced near her hometown of Jericho, Vermont, but quickly qualified for bigger races on the national junior level. During her senior year of high school, Davison won a race at Vermont's Mt. Snow, earning her a bid to the junior world championships.

"A representative from USA Cycling came up to me and told me I was going to the world championships," Davison said. "I didn't even know there was a world championship for mountain biking. I remember thinking, 'What? You can make a living out of this? Game on.'"

Despite her rapidly developing cycling career, Davison pursued her running and skiing careers at Middlebury. She ran cross country during her first year, but decided to hang up her running shoes shortly after the season ended.

On the ski slopes, Davison placed 11th at the NCAA Championship as a rookie, just hundredths of a second away from All-American status. She redshirted her sophomore year due to a cruciate ligament tear, returning to ski race as a junior.

"I was the captain of the team my senior year, but I never really returned to that same level of skiing I had been at before my injury," Davison said. "At the same time though, I realized that cycling was starting to really work out."

From there, Davison's cycling career blossomed. After years of hard work, taking several statement wins along the way, Davison claimed her first national title in 2011. The following year, she became an Olympian.

Although Davison never thought she would find her way to the sports' biggest stage on a bike, she had always dreamed of Olympic status. Growing up ski racing under the mentorship of Barbara Ann Cochran, an Olympic gold medalist in 1972, Davison vyed to be an Olympian from a young age.

"I definitely always dreamt of going to the Olympics," Davison recalled. "With that being said, it took many years of hard work and was never a guarantee. When I finally walked into that stadium in London, it was a dream coming true."

Despite her 11th place finish in London and seventh place finish in Rio, Davison highlights her crowning achievement as her recovery from hip surgery in 2014. Leaving the hospital in February, she missed the start of the season in March and made her return in mid-June, just a month before the U.S. national championship.

"At the start of the season, everyone else was going out for four hour training rides," Davison recalled with a laugh. "Meanwhile I was in my basement trying to move my leg."

Despite having only one month on the bike under her belt since coming back, Davison defended her national championship title in July with a stunning victory. In August, she earned a World Cup medal. By September, a world championship silver medal hung around her neck.

"It was a great testament to the value of determination. You're going to run into injuries, you're going to have crashes, you're going to have years with bad results, but it's when you persevere and aim for your goals that you can find success."

Now retired from the World Cup, Davison is turning her attention to both the Life Time Grand Prix and to her public speaking career. A staunch advocate for LGBTQ rights and gender equality in sports, Davison will be giving a TedX talk in Boston on May 16 to celebrate 50 years of Title IX.

In addition to her public speaking, Davison also helps run the Little Bellas program with her sister, Sabre. The program, which is centered around mentoring young girls through mountain biking, was started in 2007. Born from her sister's senior project at Middlebury, the program started with a singular program in Vermont but is now running in 71 different locations this coming summer. Davison hopes the program can teach young women to be confident in themselves, and above all, to have fun.

"It's all about having fun. I have a saying: 'Happiness is fast.' I really believe in that."

Fans who wish to follow Davison in her pursuits on and off the bike can find out more on her Instagram, @leaeatsalot.

Courtesy of Ben Freeman

Davison rides for Team USA at the London Olympics in 2012.

Club sports coaches reflect on their coaching journeys

By EMILY JONES
Sports Editor

Courtesy of Brian Goodwin

Coach Brian Goodwin shares a moment of joy with the players during a game.

Club sports are an alternative to the highly structured environment of varsity athletics at Middlebury. However, compared to varsity, club teams receive little funding and few resources, putting a lot of responsibility on the coaches to keep their teams' wheels spinning.

Here is why Middlebury's club sports coaches enjoy the work they do, despite their unique job descriptions.

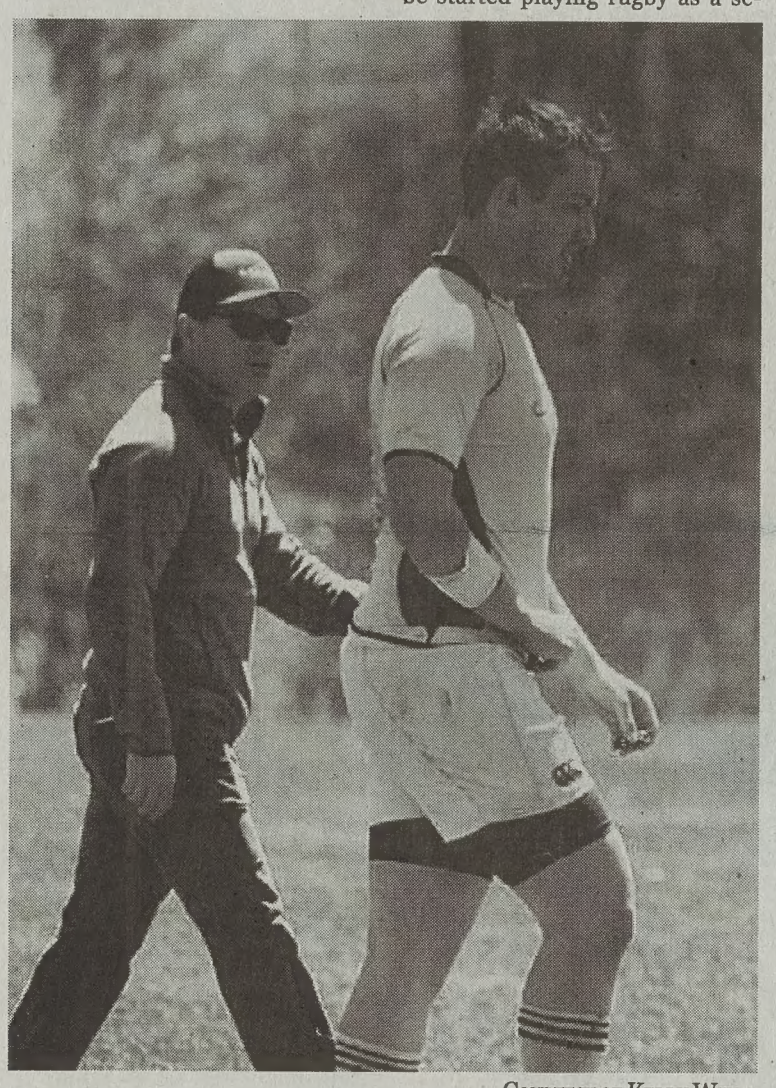
Love for the game

Middlebury's club sports coaches, inspired by a profound love for their respective sports, are the linchpins of the teams.

Brian Goodwin, the head coach of men's and women's water polo, started coaching at Middlebury in 1999 and hasn't missed a year besides the pandemic seasons. Goodwin has played water polo for much of his life and brings an extensive background in coaching. At Middlebury, he's assisted by volunteer coach, Tom McGinn, who has worked at the College for over 20 years.

Goodwin commutes nearly an hour to and from Middlebury four days each week for the team's practices. He also travels with the team for fall and spring tournaments, including the women's team's annual spring break trip to Florida.

Coach Kerry Wiebe of men's rugby shares a similar story. Wiebe started playing rugby as a senior in high school, quickly falling in love with the sport. After an impressive personal rugby career, Wiebe took up coaching, finding his way to Middlebury in 2016. Like Goodwin, Wiebe makes a significant commute to Middlebury each day for practice and travels with the team.



Courtesy of Kerry Wiebe

Coach Kerry Wiebe on the field with an athlete.

Head Coach Rich Connell of Middlebury Crew has been involved with the sport since his college days at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire. Now in his fourth year at Middlebury, he's revered by students for his past and continued accomplishments as a rower.

"[Rowing] is a beautiful, brutal sport where you have to basically turn yourself inside out to make the boat go fast," Connell said. "You learn a lot about yourself in sport: your strengths, your weaknesses. There's a lot of struggle."

> "You learn a lot about yourself in sport: your strengths, your weaknesses. There's a lot of struggle."

The club-varsity divide

While club coaches are passionate about their sports, they acknowledge the differences between club and varsity athletics at Middlebury.

Club sports rely heavily on donations from alumni to fund gear, travel, and other team expenses. For some sports, such as water polo, gift accounts fail to cover all team costs, meaning that players must pay for things like hotels and apparel. Middlebury does, however, cover critical expenses for players whose financial status would otherwise leave them unable to participate.

While Wiebe says the divide between varsity and club is stark, he acknowledges that the rugby team has some varsity privileges. Given that rugby is a collision-based sport, the school supplies the team with an athletic trainer who attends all of the practices and home games.

Wiebe notes that the rugby team is privileged at Middlebury because they have their own designated field space, although their grass field is practically unusable in the spring. Teams without a coach, such as club soccer, struggle even more to coordinate finding an adequate space and time to practice on a regular basis.

Student-coach rapport: The driving force for showing up

Middlebury's club sports coaches spoke highly of their athletes and the Middlebury student population at-large.

Part of what makes club sports so special is that many athletes come in with no prior experience in the sport. Goodwin says one of his favorite parts of the job is watching players who have never played before college evolve into strong players and continue their relationship with the sport after graduating.

Goodwin also added that his relationships with players extends far beyond their time in the pool — he's been to countless weddings and receives dozens of Christmas cards each year from former players.

Blurring the line between occupation and hobby

It's obvious that Middlebury's club sports coaches aren't in it for the money or glory.

Goodwin says he has always looked at water polo as a paid hobby, saying that the money he receives is secondary to the enjoyment. Coach Wiebe echoed this sentiment, reiterating that coaching club sports isn't a full-time job.

Indeed, all three aforementioned coaches hold jobs outside of Middlebury club sports — Goodwin owns a furnishing business, Wiebe runs a chiropractic center, and Connell works at the college as a club sports liaison and is also highly involved with the Student Activities Office.

Despite having busy work and personal lives, the coaches prioritize their time spent on the field or in the water with Middlebury students. Above all, club sports coaches are filled with gratitude for their careers at the college and aren't concerned with their unique job descriptions.

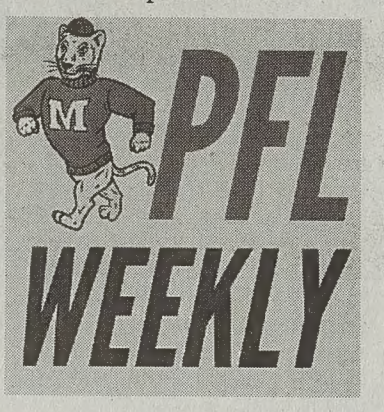
"We're probably under the radar, but we don't need recognition," Coach Wiebe said. "It's not about that for us. It's about giving whoever comes to practice an avenue to learn and play."

PFL Weekly Ep. 5:

Historic win for men's lacrosse, John Collins on fire at the plate, men's golf spring preview

By BLAISE SIEFER, ELI DIBARI, MARCO FENGLER, CAPTAIN RUDOLPH & CAROLINE HARDING

For the first time since 2009, men's lacrosse has defeated Tufts. The Panthers put on a clinic on Saturday, winning 21–14 in a game that turned heads across the nation. Elsewhere, junior catcher John Collins is leading men's baseball in several hitting categories, while Noelle Ruschil is among the best in the nation in slugging percentage for women's softball. The PFL Weekly team also previews Middlebury men's golf, who open their season this coming weekend. You won't want to miss this episode!



SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH MICHELLE LOUIE '24, WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

By LEXIE LINAFELTER
Contributing Writer

Michelle Louie '24, from Los Altos, Calif., is a sophomore on women's track and field. Recently named a Division-III All-American in the distance medley relay (DMR), Louie competes in multiple races, from the 60m to 400m. In this installment of "Seven Questions," Louie discusses NCAA nationals, her goals for the upcoming spring season, and her favorite things to do off the track.

Lexi Linafelter: *Do you have a favorite event you compete in?*

Michelle Louie: My favorite event is the 200 [meter]. It's short enough that you can run at full speed and not so long that you're exhausted by the end. It was really fun to try it indoors this year—it's one whole lap and you feel like you're flying through the turns because they're so tight.

LL: *What was the most memorable moment from NCAA nationals in March?*

ML: I remember finishing the relay and watching our last runner, Cassie Kearney '22. All of the runners that had already gone were standing on the corner cheering [and] we could see Cassie come down the long stretch at the end. When she finished, she was obviously exhausted [and] we were celebrating and jumping on the ground with her.

LL: *What is your favorite thing to do after a meet?*

ML: Team dinners are always so much fun because everyone is so relaxed—tired and happy is the way I would describe it. I have a fun ritual... I don't eat dessert or sweets the night before the race but the night after I go all out with the dessert and treat myself.

LL: *What's your favorite thing to do in Middlebury on a day off?*

ML: In the winter, it was super fun to go skiing with friends. When it's warm, I normally go to Bristol Falls or Falls of Lana. I really like to just get away from campus and spend time outside.

LL: *What are you most looking forward to heading into the outdoor season?*

ML: The opportunity to compete against more NESCAC schools. We compete against a lot of New England schools during the indoor season, but the spirit of competition at a NESCAC meet is hard to beat. The energy of NESCACs is really, really exciting and I'm looking forward to it, especially because we didn't have it last season.

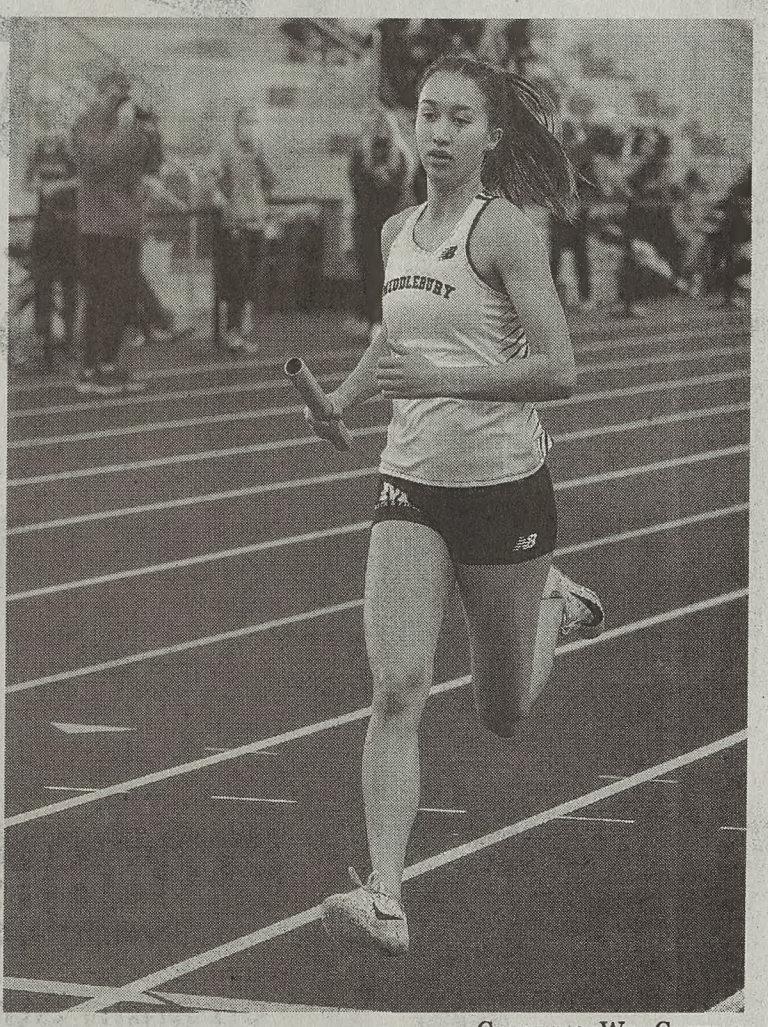
LL: *What are your biggest goals for the rest of the season?*

ML: Be a really great teammate. I want to be as supportive as possible on the great days and the bad days, in competition and in practice. The supportive environment is one of the great things about being a part of [the team], so I'm always trying to do my best to keep that going. For competition season in general, my goal is always to set personal bests.

LL: *Which dining hall is your favorite and why?*

ML: If you had asked me a few weeks ago, I would've definitely said Ross — it's such a nice eating atmosphere with the high ceilings and huge tables. However, I have a huge appreciation for Proctor now, primarily because of the pesto. I feel like that's been a big game changer.

Editor's Note: This interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.



Courtesy of Will Costello

Michelle Louie '24 races forward in an indoor relay during the Middlebury Winter Classic on Saturday, Jan. 15.

INSIGHTS FROM STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT MIDD

By NADIA HARE
Photojournalist

"Self-portrait" of Isabel Linhares taken by Nadia

Over the course of my life, I have met people with various kinds of collectibles: soviet era pins, baseball caps, and shark teeth. Meeting Summer Eaton '25 (they/them), I was introduced to their avid dinosaur collecting. On the shoe rack underneath their lofted bed were rows of dinosaur print footwear including Crocs and Converse. They also have a dino sweater and t-rex necklace gifted by their mother at graduation. Back in their hometown of Hanover, Penn., they own a dinosaur lawn chair and a dinosaur lamp. It was a comprehensive collection.

"I would say it's an obsession. At first, it was an, 'Ey! Dinos are cool.' It spiraled into everything I was getting was dinos. I'm fine with that. My younger siblings also now love dinosaurs," Eaton explained.

Eaton is comfortable using terminology such as 'disability' and 'neurodivergent' to describe aspects of their identity. However, it hasn't always been that way. Since they were diagnosed right after the pandemic, they've only recently been able to use a concrete label on a lifelong struggle to how they exist in the world. On top of that, Eaton feels there is cognitive dissonance between the representations of disability in the media and their own lived experiences.

"People look at me and say 'That's not a disability. Everyone has that sometimes.' It doesn't make my choice to do so any less valid. It's really personal how you choose to identify yourself."

Eaton refuses to comply with the expectation that neurodivergent people have to make themselves more palatable to those who are neurotypical in social situations. That said, they feel there is still distance between the way neurotypical and neurodivergent folks approach the process of socialization. "I wish neurotypical people could perceive the amount of effort I put into everyday interactions. Even to have a basic conversation requires so much work in my brain and so much energy," they described.

"The world is not how they perceive it. The world is not how I perceive it. When I'm in an interaction with someone, I'm thinking, 'How do they perceive the world? How can I understand the way they perceive the world? How can I understand them as people?' For the most part, I don't get that back in return."

Eaton's experience with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) has been limited to an email exchange requesting their Letter of Accommodation. They commented that the purposes of the DRC still remain ambiguous to them and for this reason, they do not know how to reach out. Eaton wishes that if the DRC took more of an active role in communicating to students with disabilities throughout the year so that the center would feel more accessible.

"I'm having a lot of trouble remembering to drink water. I'm not going to email them in terms of helping me create schedules for eating and drinking, that's dumb. But it's not dumb. And I still do need help making schedules and taking care of myself and releasing some of that stigma and saying that a lot of disabled people struggle with the maintenance of taking care of themselves."

...

"I can't play soccer, but I'm so passionate," Rodrigo Franco '25 (he/him) passionately tells me as he raves about Palmeiras, his local soccer team. "It's probably because of my dad. I've been going to soccer games ever since I was a kid."

Franco grew up in São Paulo, Brazil and speaks several romance languages. Relative to the other languages he speaks, Franco likes the English term "disability."

"In Brazil, if we were talking about disability, the term is deficiente which means 'deficient.' I don't like that term because it's not that you are a deficient human being, rather you are unable to do certain things."

It's hard to miss Franco's easy-going and positive nature when in conversation with him. He views his disability as a matter of self-reflection and acceptance that it is an integral facet of his identity.

"I do not know life without a disability. It's a matter of recognizing that it's a part of me, but it's not all of me," he said.

Fittingly, Franco also has a love for philosophy and questioning his purpose. He enjoys observing the natural flux of life and constantly reminds himself to be grateful for the people he loves most. While acknowledging that disability can have a positive and negative perception, Franco flows through life as an optimist.

"I try to look at things from the positive side. I've fought really hard to be alive right now. It's a privilege to be here," he said.

Franco's experience with the DRC has been positive. "The DRC has been great in welcoming me to Midd," he said. "They have been doing everything they can to make sure I am as comfortable as I can be."

However, Franco admits that certain services relating to campus mobility during the winter months should be improved. "I don't know if the DRC has the power to do these things but when it's snowy and icy, having to walk across campus can be challenging. Some universities have a bus system, but we don't. We have to walk. I like to walk, but depending on the conditions it can be difficult."

As a final note, Franco wanted to mention that he is naturally outspoken and is at ease speaking about his disability with others as it is part of embracing himself. "Sometimes people hesitate to ask me about my disability or bring the subject up," he said. "Don't hesitate. I'm very comfortable with it."

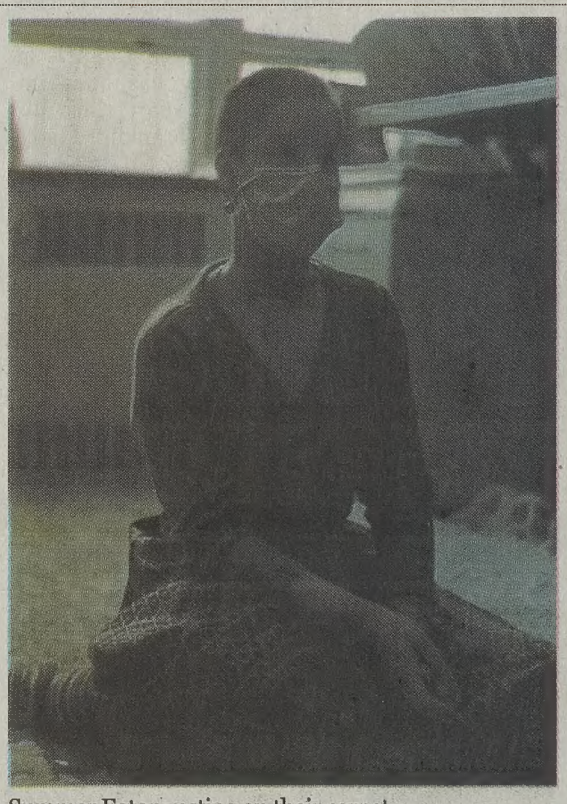
...

Last fall Isabel Linhares '22.5 (she/they) took two courses with Dr. Susan Burch, the head of the American Studies department, who specifically teaches disability studies. That was enough for Isabel to switch from a Physics and Molecular Biology and Biochemistry double major to pursuing an Independent Scholar major in a field related to disabilities.

"I fell in love with the way that she teaches, how accessible she made her teaching and how relevant the material was to everything I was going through," Linhares said. "I began to think beyond the western biomedical model of disability."

Over winter break, Linhares realized that her passion for art therapy could be pursued as a career. "I'm aware of the history of psychiatry and psychology in perpetuating ableism and other systems of oppression. I want to practice art therapy in a way that works with disability justice principles in mind while taking into account that struggles are not individual problems and are instead indicative of larger systemic patterns."

Linhares is prominently engaged with disability activism on campus. The roots of her disability activism tend to begin with a simple dinner conversation with friends and realizing a shared accessibility need that must be met. With the support of the Concerned Students of Middlebury, Linhares and her friends will advocate for their needs by collectively writing a mass email to a campus resource such as Director of Education for Equity and Inclusion Renee Wells or the DRC. "It's hard to know what is considered activism because every week there's a new fight for a different access need," Linhares admits.



Summer Eaton resting on their carpet

Summer Eaton showing me their dino sweater

In the past, Linhares tells me that she and her friends advocated for mobility scooters. After resistance from the DRC, the request was eventually granted. "We identified that we needed help and we weren't going to take no for an answer," she said. The scooters are also now available to students who are injured.

According to Linhares, Middlebury's social scene is particularly exclusive and unsafe for students with disabilities.

"The presumed hyper-abledness that Midd actively tries to foster through our predominantly white, able-bodied, athlete and outdoorsy culture makes a lot of social spaces not compatible and irrelevant to us that cannot fit that label of what Midd culture defines its ideal student to be."

Finding well-connected disabled folks on campus through classes and non-disability related club events during their first year has been Linhares' primary means of surviving these dominant spaces.

"We're everywhere. We're all struggling to be in these spaces. It's not too hard to figure out who's also struggling and band together. Once you make those friends it isn't always easy to hang out together if you both have mobility challenges. It's a challenge but finding that community is how I've gotten through Midd," she said.

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Along with learning from student insights, I wanted to include the perspective of the DRC as well. Over a Zoom call, I chatted with Jodi Litchfield (she/her) and Peter Ploegman (he/him), both ADA coordinators who make up the DRC.

Originally planning to be a high school history teacher after graduating college, Ploegman switched tracks as he began working in higher education when he had to record audiobooks onto cassette tapes. That was his first introduction to the field of disability in the workplace. After that, he became involved in training by the Association on Higher Education and Disability and became a Learning Support Specialist. Ploegman eventually joined the office at Middlebury in January of 2020.

Litchfield is a longtime member. She joined the office in 1999 as an assistant director, four years after the DRC was founded. "I was by myself in the office straight until 2017 when we finally hired a second coordinator because the number of students had expanded so much since the beginning that we definitely needed a second coordinator at the time. We're grateful we have Peter here," Litchfield said.

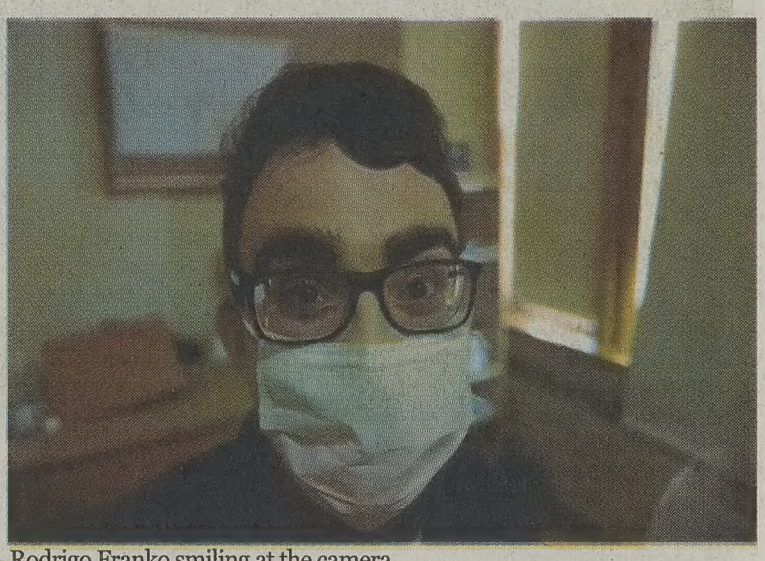
Prior to the DRC, the office was called 'Student Accessibility Services.'

"The difference between these names is that we're not a service-oriented office. By changing the name to 'center' we are trying to become a part of campus culture and another aspect of diversity on this campus. That's why we have a seat on the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (OIDEI)," Ploegman explained.

Litchfield and Ploegman said that inaccurate statements have been made about the DRC but did not go into further detail during the interview. They both highlighted that they welcome feedback and are open to Middlebury students reaching out to ask questions.

"We encounter students every semester who have overcome some fairly steep challenges to get here. We acknowledge and applaud that. We do our best to provide the accommodations that will give them the best chance to be successful," Ploegman commented.

Rodrigo Franko's hand perched on his knee



Rodrigo Franko smiling at the camera